

REMARKS

The non-final Office Action mailed May 27, 2004 has been reviewed and the Examiner's comments carefully considered. No claims are cancelled or added. Claims 1, 5, 7, 12 and 14 are amended. Claims 1-15 remain pending and are submitted for reconsideration.

The allowance of claims 9-11 and the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 7, 8, 14, and 15 is noted with appreciation. Claims 7 and 14 have been rewritten in independent form. Thus, claims 7-11, 14 and 15 are now in condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 2, 4-6, 12, and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by GB 2,343,868 ("Masuda"). The rejection should be withdrawn because Masuda fails to disclose teach or suggest the claimed inventions. The claims are addressed in turn below.

For example, Masuda fails to disclose, teach or suggest a cushion including two base fabrics sewn together to enclose an inflatable chamber and an outer shell fabric superposed on outer surfaces of the fabric as called for in claim 1. The Office Action states that the inner panels 21, 22 disclosed in Masuda correspond to the claimed cabin-side base fabric and the window-side base fabric recited in claim 1. However, as clearly shown in Figure 2 of Masuda, the inner panels 21, 22 are not "sewn together along a seam to enclose an inflatable chamber" as recited in claim 1. In Masuda, the inflatable chamber 14 is enclosed by the main panels 11, 12 whereas the inner panels 21, 22 extend only partially into the chamber 14. Thus, the rejection of claim 1 should be withdrawn.

The rejection of claims 5 and 12 should be withdrawn for similar reasons. For example, both claims 5 and 12 recite a pair of sheets that are sewn together to enclose an inflatable chamber. These claims also recite a layer of fabric attached to an exterior surface of one of the sheets. Masuda fails to disclose, teach or suggest such a structure. As mentioned above, the Office Action states that the inner panels 21, 22 of Masuda correspond to the claimed window side sheet and the passenger side sheet recited in claims 5 and 12. However, as mentioned above, the inner panels 21, 22 are not "sewn together along a seam to enclose an inflatable chamber."

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1, 5 and 12 is respectfully requested. Each of claims 2-4, 6 and 13 depend from one of claims 1, 5 or 12 and are allowable therewith, for at least the reasons set forth above, without regard to the further patentable limitations contained therein.

These patentable limitations include for example, a side airbag wherein the shape of the fabric layer corresponds substantially to the shape of the passenger side sheet [or window side sheet] as called for in claims 6 and 13. The Office Action states that “the shape of the fabric layer corresponds to the shape of the side sheets (the overall shape as seen in Figure 1)[.]” However, Figure 1 of Masuda shows that the inner panels 21, 22 are merely present along the perimeter of the airbag 10, but do not have a shape that is substantially the same as the outer panels 11, 12. Furthermore, Figure 2 of Masuda shows that the inner panels 21, 22 extend only partially into the airbag 10 and do not substantially match the shape of the outer panels 11, 12. In other words, as shown in Figures 1 and 2 of Masuda, the inner panels 21, 22 do not conform “substantially to the shape of the” outer panels 11, 12 and, therefore, the inner panels 21, 22 do not substantially conform to the passenger side sheet and the window side sheet as recited in claims 6 and 13, respectively. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 6 and 13 should be withdrawn.

Further by way of example, with regard to claim 3, the reference relied upon by the PTO (EP 0 962 363 (“Mishina”)) fails to cure the deficiencies of Masuda. Figs. 1 and 2 of Mishina disclose an adhesive 5 positioned between panels 1, 2, in the vicinity of seams 6A, 6B. However, Mishina fails to disclose, teach or suggest that the panels are cabin-side and window-side base fabrics that are enclosed by an outer fabric shell as called for in claim 1.

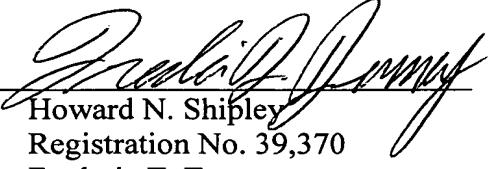
Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would expedite allowance of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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